

COMMITTEE MINUTES for GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT

Date: January 23, 2007

Place: Supreme Court Chamber

Convened: 1/23/2007
9:30 AM

Recessed:

Reconvened:

Adjourned: 1/23/2007
11:25 AM

Present: Senators Courtney-CH, Connolly-VC, Wieck-RM, Lundby, Schmitz
Representatives Lensing-CH, Ford-VC, Watts-RM, Baudler, Berry, Olson, S., Swaim,
Tymeson, Whitead

Absent: None

Excused: None

Chairman Courtney called the Government Oversight Committee Meeting to order at 9:32 am.

Role was called and those absent were excused. Minutes were approved.

Senator Courtney made opening statements regarding the Mediacom/Sinclair dispute and the impact on Iowans.

Senator Courtney recognized guest speaker Linda Carter Lewis, President of the NAACP Des Moines branch. Lewis expressed her concern regarding the unresolved dispute between Mediacom and Sinclair. The NAACP sites discrimination and unfair access to services as two of their main concerns. The dispute is adversely affecting low income families in Iowa. Lewis and the NAACP support settlement of this dispute through binding arbitration.

Senator Courtney recognized guest speakers of Mediacom Communications Corporation and Sinclair Broadcast Group. Each speaker was given 10 minutes to deliver their opening remarks.

Rocco Commisso, Chairman and CEO, and Ed Pardini, Divisional Vice-President of Mediacom Communications Corporation addressed the committee. Commisso gave an opening statement and a brief overview of his history. Pardini gave an overview of the Mediacom products and services and the investments and benefits Mediacom has given to Iowa.

David Smith, President and CEO, and Barry Faber, General Counsel from Sinclair Broadcast Group, addressed the committee. Faber discussed the 1992 Cable Television Act and the resulting law that requires that broadcasters be paid by cable companies. Faber stated that despite 15 months of negotiation, retransmission consent has not been reached, and that retransmission is governed by the federal government and the FCC, and this dispute is completely legal. Sinclair apologized to Mediacom customers for what they believe is Mediacom's failure to reach an agreement.

Senator Courtney opened the floor for questioning by committee members. Each member addressed the panel of speakers with questions.

Senator Courtney introduced the final speaker, Janet Keefer, the Associate Professor of Journalism at Drake University. Keefer addressed the committee, saying that the Government Oversight Committee was well advised to hold the hearing to clarify what is being done to resolve this issue.

Senator Connolly moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:26 am.

Senator Thomas G. Courtney

Erin Kreiman, Committee Secretary